

Another Korean War veteran from Alamogordo receives belated gratitude, is presented with three service medals

By Michael Johnson

ALAMOGORDO- Within moments of pinning three long-overdue military service medals on the chest of Korean War veteran Carl Cox, Congressman Harry Teague was presented with an interesting question from someone among the small contingent on hand to witness the occasion.

"What is it about people from Alamogordo whose last name ends with 'ox' not getting their medals?"

The question was posed by Malcolm Yox, who in April accepted from Teague seven overdue medals for his service in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War. Yox read about Cox's medal ceremony in Sunday's edition of the Daily News and attended Cox's event in a show of support and respect.

Later, Teague admitted the question momentarily stunned him.

"I never thought about it like that until (Yox) brought it up," Teague said.

Cox, a U.S. Army veteran, received three medals - the Defense Service Medal, the Korean Service Medal and the United Nations Service Medal - for time spent serving during the Korean War.

The ceremony took place Sunday afternoon at Good Samaritan Society-Betty Dare on North Florida Avenue.

Cox's daughter, Rochelle Cox, first approached the Daily News after reading a story April 18 about Yox, who waited almost 60 years for seven medals he earned while serving in Korea. She said her father had also served in Korea and didn't receive medals for his service. The Daily News then forwarded her concerns to Teague's office.

Teague's staff informed Rochelle Cox last week that her father's service had been verified and the medals would be presented to him.

"I'm just so thankful for this," she said.

Carl Cox is a man of few words and humbly accepted his long-overdue medals.

"The Army was good to me," he said. "The only regret I have is when we came back (from Korea), people treated you like scum. It wasn't like the way it is now, where they treat veterans how they ought to be treated."

Teague offered an apology on behalf of the government for its belated recognition.

"You're an example of many veterans who served during that time. You didn't think anything of it; you just went and did it," Teague said. "It was something you were supposed to do. It is unfortunate and the shame of America that the Korean (War) vets are the ones we try to forget - like (the war) never happened.

"While I'm pretty disappointed about that, I'm encouraged that during the last 15 years, our country is starting to see things differently and starting to accept the veterans," he added. "Even if (people) don't like the war, they're separating the warriors from the war and treating (veterans) with the respect that they deserve."

After the ceremony, Carl and his daughter strolled the halls of Betty Dare and prepared to exit the facility when Rochelle posed a question.

"You spent time at Holloman, didn't you?" she asked. "What did you do there?"

"Wouldn't you like to know?" Carl responded without missing a step upon exiting the building.

"I've been asking him that for years," she said. "He always said it was top secret. I guess it still is."